

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 451

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BORDEAUX 0133

PARIS FOR ECON/COMM: WM MILLER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, FR

SUBJECT: CONCORDE

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO AEROSPATIALE OFFICIALS IN TOULOUSE
USG SHOULD REALIZE THAT DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO GRANT
CONCORDE LANDING RIGHTS AT JFK AND DULLES AIRPORTS IS
BASICALLY A POLITIAL ONE WHICH, IF NEGATIVE, CAN SERIOUSLY
AFFECT NOT ONLY US/FRENCH RELATIONS, BUT CAN CALL INTO
QUESTION USG'S CREDIBILITY IN ITS STATED POLICIES OF
COOPERATING WITH ITS WEST EUROPEAN ALLIES ON AN EQUAL
FOOTING. DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADVANCED CIVIL AVIATION INDUSTRY
IN EUROPE, THEY CONTEND, GOES BEYOND ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL
CONSIDERATIONS AND IS OF SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANCE TO WESTERN
ALLIANCE. D/G OF AEROSPATIALE MADE CLEAR THAT SUCCESS
OF WHOLE CONCORDE PROGRAM DEPENDED ON FAVORABLE DECISION RE
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LANDING RIGHTS AT JFK AIRPORT. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING VISIT TO TOULOUSE OCT 13 I HAD EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION WITH BERNARD DUFOUR, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF AEROSPATIALE, AND OTHER LEADING OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONSTRUCTION AND FLIGHT TESTING OF CONCORDE. MUCH FAMILIAR GROUND WAS COVERED IN TERMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF CONCORDE AND ITS MARKETABILITY. WE DISCUSSED IMMINENT PUBLICATION OF FINAL EIS AND NEXT STEPS TO BE TAKEN INCLUDING DECISION BY COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY. POSSIBILITY OF COURT ACTION AIMED AT FINAL EIS BY ANTI-CONCORDE GROUPS AND DOUBTS OVER LOCAL DECISION OF NY PORT AUTHORITY ARE OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO AEROSPATIALE OFFICIALS. ON LATTER POINT, DUFOUR STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT GAINING LANDING RIGHTS AT JFK WAS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE WHOLE CONCORDE PROGRAM AND WAS ESSENTIAL FOR THE PLANE'S SUCCESSFUL COMMERCIALIZATION. IN THIS CONTEXT, DULLES AIRPORT WAS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE. BRITISH AVIATION COUNTERPARTS ARE NOT INTERESTED IN DULLES, AEROSPATIALE OFFICIALS SAID, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF A DIRECT AIRPORT LINKUP TO NATIONAL ROUTES IN USA. NECESSITY OF SHUTTLING TO NATIONAL AIRPORT IS A DISTINCT DISADVANTAGE.

3. CONTRARY TO WHAT I WAS TOLD BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN TOULOUSE THAT IF CONCORDE WAS GRANTED LANDING RIGHTS IN USA IT WOULD MEAN OPENING OF MANY THOUSAND NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES, AEROSPATIALE OFFICIALS STATED THAT MAXIMUM NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN FRANCE AS RESULT OF FAVORABLE US DECISION WOULD BE ONLY ONE OR TWO THOUSAND IN ADDITION TO PRESENT SIX TO SEVEN THOUSAND MAN WORK FORCE.

4. AEROSPATIALE OFFICIALS CONSIDERED DRAFT EIS ASSESSMENT OF TOTAL NUMBER OF CONCORDES WHICH MIGHT BE BUILT BY 1985 (30-40) TO BE UNDULY LOW. DUFOUR STATED THAT, ASSUMING FAVORABLE DECISION, CONCORDE FLEET WILL REACH 80 AIRCRAFT BY 1985. IN WIDER CONTEXT, DUFOUR SAID EUROPE'S CIVIL AVIATION INDUSTRY WILL DEMAND AT LEAST 25 PERCENT OF THE CIVIL AVIATION MARKET AND NOT MERELY THE APPROXIMATELY 7 PERCENT IT NOW HAS. IN THIS RESPECT, HE STRESSED THAT U.S. CIVIL AVIATION INDUSTRY MUST CEDE MORE PROPORTIONATE SHARE OF MARKET TO EUROPE.

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5. THIS SUBJECT LED TO MAIN MESSAGE AEROSPATIALE OFFICIALS WANTED TO GET ACROSS: NAMELY, THAT USG MUST REALIZE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO ATLANTIC ALLIANCE OF AN ADVANCED EUROPEAN CIVIL AVIATION INDUSTRY. ALLIANCE AND FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS MUST GO BEYOND MERE DECLARATIONS OF EQUALITY AND COOPERATION AND MUST BE TRANSLATED INTO DEEDS. IF AFTER U.S. SUCCESS IN MILITARY AVIATION FIELD IN SO-CALLED "ARMSS DEAL OF THE CENTURY", U.S. STIFLES EUROPEAN SUPERSONIC

CIVIL AVIATION INDUSTRY, POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS WILL BE OF UTMOST SERIOUSNESS. FRENCH AND BRITISH AVIATION INDUSTRIES HAVE CRITICAL TECHNOLOGICAL INVESTMENT IN CONCORDE WHICH IS A SYMBOL OF THE "NEW EUROPE" - NOT THE EUROPE OF THE POST-WAR ERA WHICH NEEDED AID, BUT A EUROPE WHICH CAN PARTICIPATE FULLY IN ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT. ACCORDINGLY, USG MUST UNDERSTAND FRENCH AND BRITISH PRIDE IN THIS DEVELOPMENT.

6. CONSEQUENTLY AND IN FULL CONSIDERATION OF ALL THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS SURROUNDING CONCORDE'S FUTURE, AEROSPATIALE OFFICIALS CONVINCED THAT CONCORDE IS AN ISSUE WHICH, EVENTUALLY, MUST BE DECIDED AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL; ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF THE ADVERSE IMPACT ON BILATERAL AND US/EUROPEAN RELATIONS OF A NEGATIVE AMERICAN DECISION AT EITHER THE FEDERAL OR LOCAL LEVEL.

COMMENT: IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT WHEN ASKED WHETHER OR NOT GOF, AND ESPECIALLY FONMIN, SHARED POLITICAL ASSESSMENT OF AEROSPATIALE OFFICIALS ON CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE US DECISION, THESE OFFICIALS STATED THAT THEY DID NOT KNOW AND CLAIMED THAT THEY WERE UNAWARE OF ANY HIGH LEVEL DEMARCHE TO USG ON THIS BASIS.

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